

CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
(Engineering Research)
Highland Park
Wayne County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-142-C

HAER
MICH
82-HIPA
2C-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
Department of the Interior
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

HAER
MICH
82-HIP,
AC-

CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
HAER No. MI-142-C
(page 1)

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138 (Engineering Research)

Location: Quad: Highland Park, Michigan 1:24,000

UTM: 17.328540.4696470

Dates of
Construction: 1928

Architects: Smith, Hinchman & Grylls

Builder: not known

Present
Owner: The Chrysler Corporation
800 Chrysler Drive East
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

Present Use: Vacant

Significance: This is one of only two reinforced-concrete buildings on this site designed by the Detroit architectural firm of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls. Originally constructed as a two-story storage building for new cars, a third floor was added shortly after the initial construction.

Historian: Charles K. Hyde, Wayne State University,
Detroit, Michigan 48202, February-May 1997

CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
HAER No. MI-142-C
(page 2)

This building first appeared on the site plan of the Highland Park plant prepared at the end of 1928 and identified as built in 1928. This rectangular three-story building has a reinforced concrete skeletal framework clearly visible on the outside. It looks much like a typical "daylight Factory" of that period, with steel-sash windows taking up most of the space between the structural ribs. It has a flat roof and measures 80'0" X 540'0" overall.

This building is sometimes attributed to Albert Kahn because it mimics the look of factory buildings he designed elsewhere. Surviving plans dated 5 March 1928 identify the architect as the Detroit firm of Smith, Hinchman & Grylls (SH&G). Known as the "Car Storage Building," this was initially planned as a two-story building to be used to store new Chrysler automobiles before delivery. Two pairs of ramps inside the building allowed cars to be driven between the first and second floors. Several notes indicating where a "Future 3rd Floor" would be connected to the existing structure showed Chrysler's plans for expansion. SH&G's job records show the initial project (Job # 6068) dated 9 February 1928 and the third floor addition (Job # 6171), dated 26 July 1928. The automobile ramps were probably removed by early 1929, when the building was converted into laboratory space.¹

The layout of all three floors is very similar. A central corridor runs the length of the building flanked by scores of various sized laboratories on each floor.

CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
HAER No. MI-142-C
(page 3)

NOTES

¹Architectural plans, "Car Storage Building For the Chrysler Corporation," Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, Job #6068 (5 March 1928), in the Chrysler Center plant engineering offices. The building is also listed as a 1928 commission in the "SH&G Selected Job List" in Thomas J. Holleman and James P. Gallagher, Smith, Hinchman & Grylls: 125 Years of Architecture and Engineering, 1853-1978 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), p. 213. This architectural firm, now known as SHG Incorporated, maintains card files of all their jobs starting in the early twentieth century.

CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
HAER No. MI-142-C
(page 4)

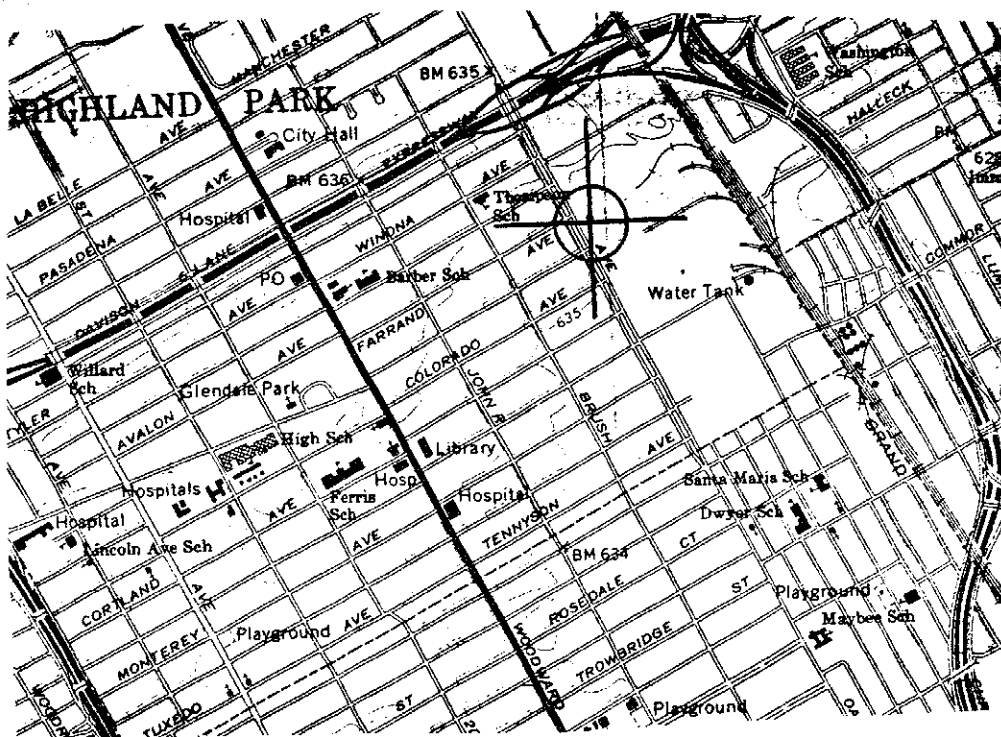
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

See the list of sources for the overview report.

CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
HAER No. MI-142-C
(page 5)

HIGHLAND PARK, MICHIGAN QUADRANGLE, 1:24,000

UTM: 17.328540.4696470



CHRYSLER CENTER, Building 138
HAER No. MI-142-C
(page 6)

GENERAL FLOOR PLAN

